

DECEMBER 2005

Facets

FOR WOMEN

Get-together **GURUS**

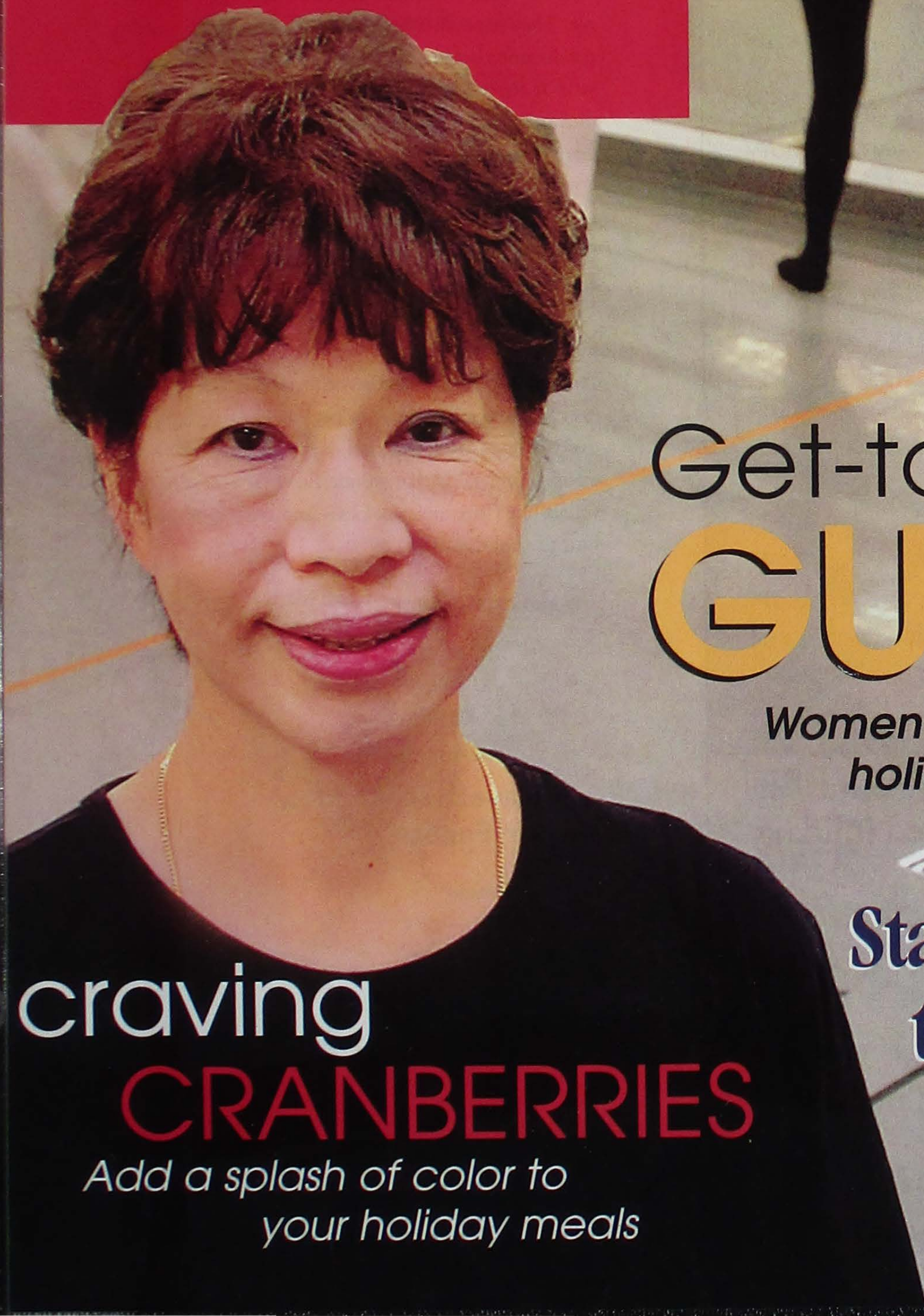
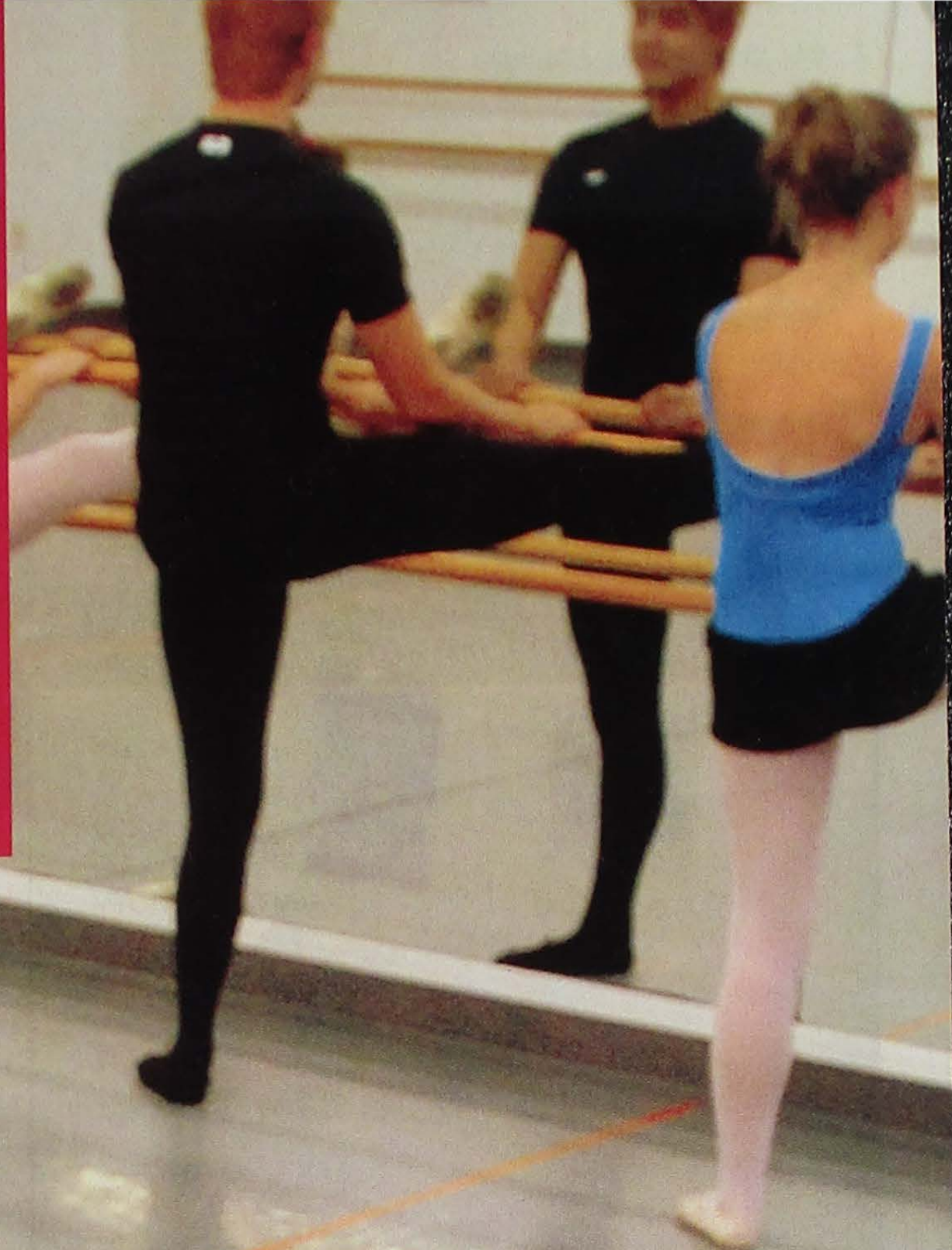
*Women share advice on
holiday organization*

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*Make your workout more
efficient during the hectic
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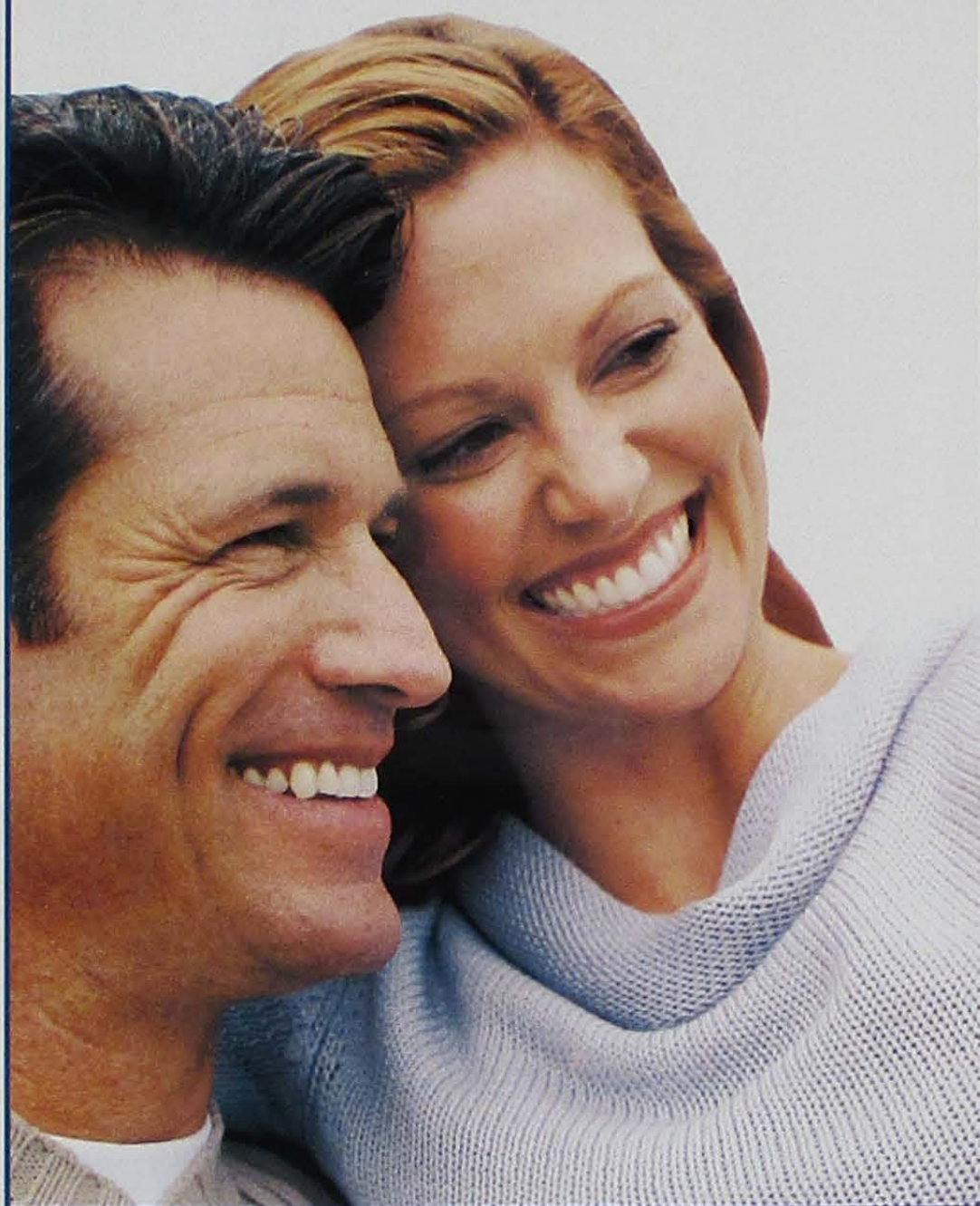


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NOTES

from the newsroom

There's an aphorism that goes something like, "If you really want something done, ask a busy person to do it."

The four women featured in the cover story of this issue of Facets are apparently some of those busy people. They've taken on the tasks of organizing some big productions during one of the most hectic times of the year. If anyone can offer some advice on keeping cool during holiday pressure, these women can. Read on to learn some of their secrets.

The rest of the issue is filled with tips on managing the rest of your holidays, from after-shopping stress relief tips to advice on making (and sticking to!) a holiday budget.

Nancy Lewis shares her story of retiring from the job of Christmas maestro, and Malisa Rader gives a vivid account of her battle with a tipsy Christmas tree.

In short, it's an issue to get you excited, but not overwhelmed, about the holidays. Grab yourself a cup of tea – preferably that wonderful spicy kind that smells like Christmas cookies – and read on to ease into the holiday spirit. ♦

— Heidi Marttila-Losure, editor

Have a story idea for Facets?

Call Heidi
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WELCOME TO

Facets

Facet > 1. One of the flat surfaces cut on a gemstone.

2. The particular angle from which something is considered.

FACETS IS A SUPPLEMENT TO THE TRIBUNE

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CONTRIBUTORS

EDITOR

Heidi Marttila-Losure

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Buffy Sue Clatt

FACETS PAGE DESIGN

Linda Oppedal

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS

Celeste Jones

Katie Hamre

Kevin Smith

Rachel Sorensen

ADVERTISING SALES

Cara Rasmus

call 232-2160 for sales information

COVER STORY PHOTOGRAPHY

Jon Britton

Andy Rullestad

Heidi Marttila-Losure

FOR

women

TAKING ON THE

Christmas
TREE

By Malisa Rader

Last holiday season is one I am sure to never forget. I had a battle with a Christmas tree in which we both came out scarred and damaged.

It began with our annual tradition of cutting down a tree. We walked from tree to tree at the tree farm, inspecting each one carefully before finally making the perfect selection. It was actually one of the most beautiful trees we have ever had — no “ugly” sides, no sparse branches and great color. I envisioned this tree turning my living room into something out of Midwest Living.

Little did I know this tree was not going down without a fight. My spouse sawed for what seemed like an eternity while I did my best to entertain two children with only pine needles and pine cones. As my creativity was about at the end of its rope, the tree finally fell. We loaded it in the back of our truck and headed for home. As I dreamed of a family Christmas tree decorating like something out of “Little House on the Prairie,” this tree dreamed of revenge.

We pulled out our trusty tree stand, the one that has held many trees over the years. I did my usual job of holding the tree as my husband tightened the screws at the base to hold the tree in place. Two hours later, my hands sticky from sap, we decided this was as straight as it was going to get. We completed the decorations and stood back to admire as the old-world Santa, all dressed in red and fur-trimmed velvet, was placed on top. And, if you turned your head to just the right angle, you would have agreed it was a perfect tree.

Within the hour, I heard a crash from the kitchen. It was a sad sight for even Scrooge to see — our beautiful tree lying on its side. Upon further inspection, we found it had twisted the screws of our trusty old tree stand into pathetic pieces of scrap metal. Two of my most precious ornaments were broken beyond repair, and there was enough water to fill a small baby pool soaking my carpet. We propped the tree in the corner and set our now dilapidated tree stand on the curb for the next garbage pick-up.

I was determined to have a spectacular tree for Christmas and spent the next afternoon selecting the most industrial-strength tree stand money could buy. Several hours later (and after several cell phone calls to my spouse describing the details and features of each stand), I made my selection. I was determined to not let this minor event spoil my family's happy holidays.

I can't tell you the next complete sequence of events because my mind is cloudy on the details,



but I can tell you that wires, nails and hooks were discussed during the course of the evening as we placed the tree in the new stand and began decorating it. For about half an hour (just long enough for me to restring the lights on the tree), it stood erect. Then it slowly started its descent. Due to the "try to defy physics" contraption we had devised with wires and hooks, another twisted tree stand was tossed out on the curb. I can only imagine the wild look in my eyes as I gazed upon yet another pool of water spilled on the carpet, broken ornaments and twisted lights.

I returned to the store, selected another stand, and returned home. To my surprise, my family had moved on with their lives and found other things to do. I could not seem to do the same. I was obsessed with making this tree become the perfect holiday decoration. With no one around to witness the spectacle, I began a wrestling match that must have compared to some of the greatest in Olympic history. It would no longer be acceptable to have my tree rest comfortably in the corner or even slightly off-center. The tree had begun the battle, and I was going to finish it with a perfectly erect and beautiful holiday symbol.

There was a lot of shaking and grunting and yelling (the likes of which cannot be printed here). Just as I began fantasizing about having myself a little "tree lighting" ceremony, I stumbled upon success. The tree had fought a hard battle, and I had emerged the victor (although you could not tell it from my badly scraped arms). I quickly did a patch job on the ornaments and twisted lights.

Again, the final touch involved adding the old-world Santa to the top. Operation "Tree Stands Alone" seemed complete.

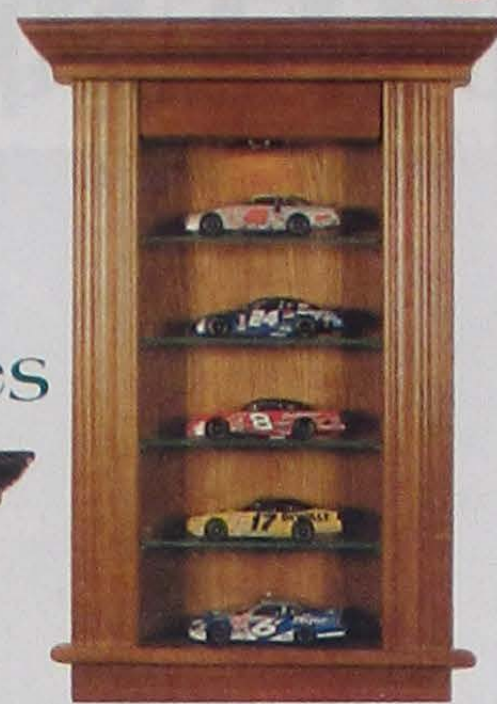
I don't recall if I laughed or cried as the tree fell over again within the hour. In defeat, I removed every ornament and light from the tree. As I sadly dragged the tree to the front porch, I realized that neither one of us had emerged the winner. I filled an entire vacuum bag with pine needles as I worked to rid my living room of the battle signs.

Once again I returned to the holiday section of the store. This time not to buy a new tree stand, but an artificial tree equipped with lights. I found a display on clearance, and the attendant loaded the fully assembled tree into the back of my SUV. I brought it into my home in two pieces and within 45 minutes had it fully decorated.

What parenting lesson did I learn? Sometimes we need to seek advice from others. Sometimes another set of hands is needed. Other times we need to recognize that our expectations have been set too high. I guess I needed this humbling experience to reexamine my priorities, shift gears and refocus on celebrating the holiday AND my family. ♦

"Little did I know this tree was not going down without a fight."

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GIVING & RECEIVING

What to give up to get more out of your holiday workout

By Debra Atkinson

The challenge of the holiday season is that with all the gratitude, glitter and holiday glamour, you have more to do in less time. Even before the additional frenzy began, few of us were complaining of too little to do with our time.

It's time to get serious about time; to multi-task where possible and minimize where you can. We're talking about a paired-down-to-basics workout, not one that's absent. We're talking about gift giving (and receiving) that will take you far into the New Year with a fresh fitness-minded attitude. And we're talking about being a pinch selfish this season with your own time.

Commit to the holiday party at the gym as you respond to all those other RSVPs. You already know you need to exercise to feel your best. Commit to three sessions a week at least so that you'll feel good, concentrate better on that wish list, have optimal energy and sleep well. To make the most of your exercise time before Aunt So-and-So drops her luggage at the front door, you also need to drop some baggage. The name of the game is more results in less time. So lose the dead weight in your workout.

Lose the side bends with weights. It is one of the biggest wastes of time in a workout. The angle of your body is not great enough to add any overload that will get you results. You need to resist gravity more. Peek into a yoga or Pilates class even if you don't go, and you can borrow that side plank. It will be much more effective than holding the dumbbell and bending to the side. Need proof? How long can you hold the side plank versus perform side bends?

Exactly.

Lose the 100 crunches on the floor. Find variations that are harder so that fewer repetitions fatigue. Whether you are doing those for definition, waist-whittling, or support for your lower back, if you can do 100, honey, it's not working!

Lose the inner thigh machine and the side-lying leg lifts. Choose instead to concentrate on squats, lunges and leg press exercises for your lower body. They multi-task your lower body by working three large muscle groups at the same time. And with one-legged leg presses or squats (assisted makes this work for almost anyone), you

include your adductors (inner thighs) without wasted time on another machine. (The targeted muscles on that one may not really get what you're after anyway, but that's another article entirely!)

Lose the chest flies you might mistakenly think are going to create last-minute cleavage in that beaded tank. Two words for you: Victoria's Secret. To really get the most out of your chest workout and target upper arms, go for compound presses: the bench press, the seated chest machine or even pushups will do the trick. In an athlete's weight room you won't find many coaches using chest flies, and for a good reason — they are not a maximally effective exercise. When you have more time again after the holiday rush is over, adding another exercise to your repertoire can help you burn some calories by staying active longer, but your body won't miss it right now!

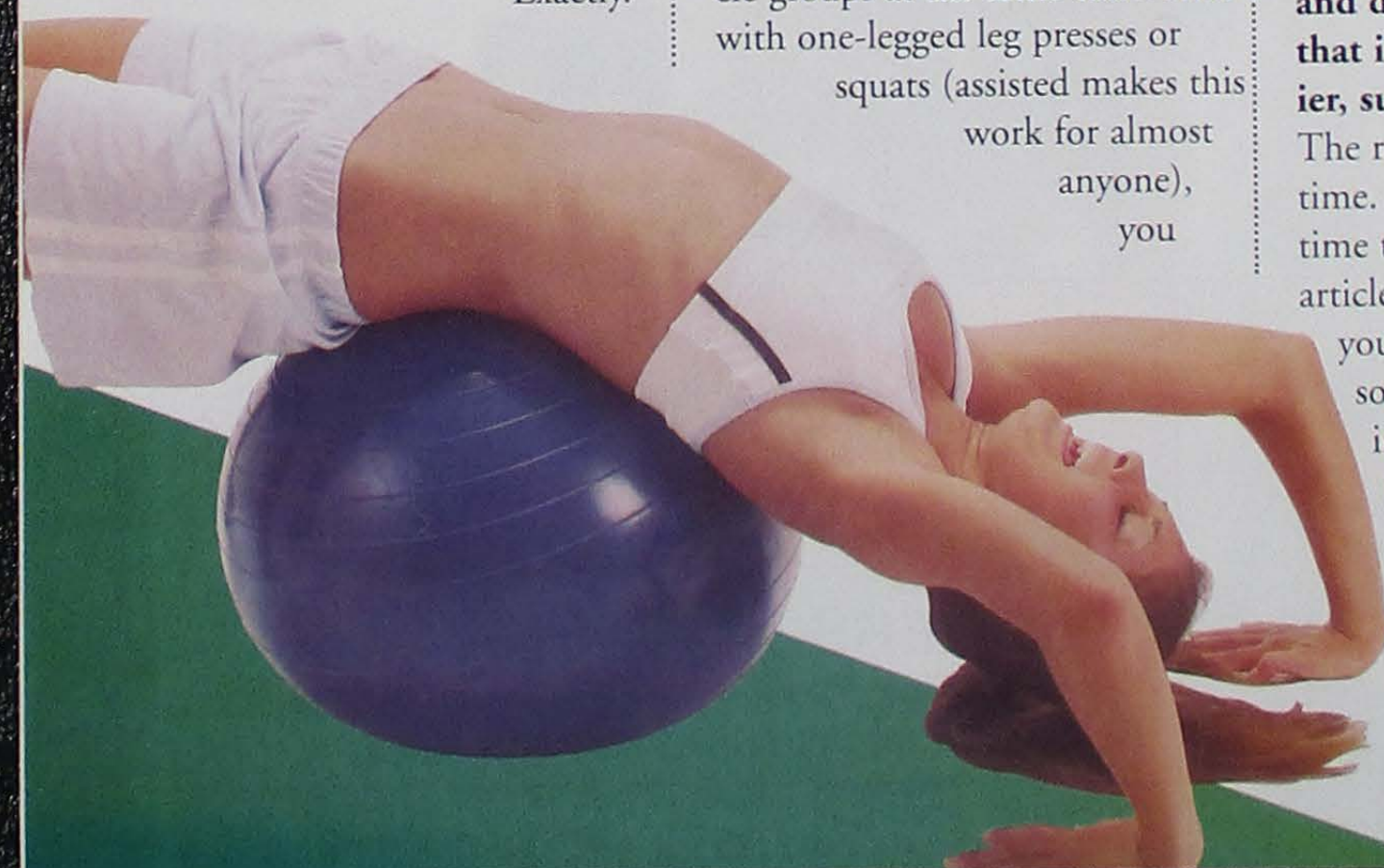
Lose the stroll on the treadmill in favor of a new machine that your body isn't used to, and do it at an intensity level that is alternately hard and easier, such as interval training. The results? More results in less time. This truly may not be the time to read the latest magazine article, even Facets, while you do your cardio work. Focus on some lively holiday music instead and you're more likely to keep your intensity up and your form where optimal changes can occur. Trying to read makes you lean forward, slow down and get lost in the article

instead of what you're doing. There are times when getting lost and spending more time exercising is a good idea. When you don't have so much disposable time, focus. You can potentially burn more calories in 20 minutes of interval training than 30 minutes at a steady slower rate. If you're trying to beat the line for more twinkle lights, 10 minutes can be important!

At some point you will have to shop this season. One-stop shopping can be yours with gift certificates available for gym memberships, personal training, massage, swimming lessons, classes or instruction in something your gift recipients have never done before.

What do you want to have accomplished when we stare this season in the face again next year? How do you want to feel, to look, to be? What will it take for you to get there? Make your gift-giving list as well as your own wish list with those questions in mind.

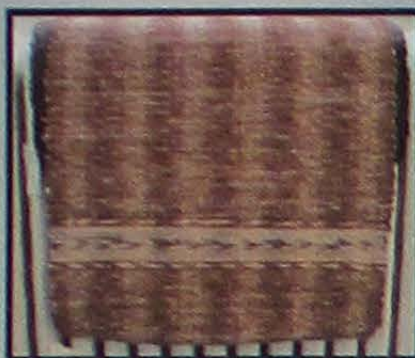
Time, unfortunately, is not a gift we can give directly, but one we can help people to use wisely, enjoy more fully, and make the most of. Take some for yourself, in fact. Have the merriest! ♦



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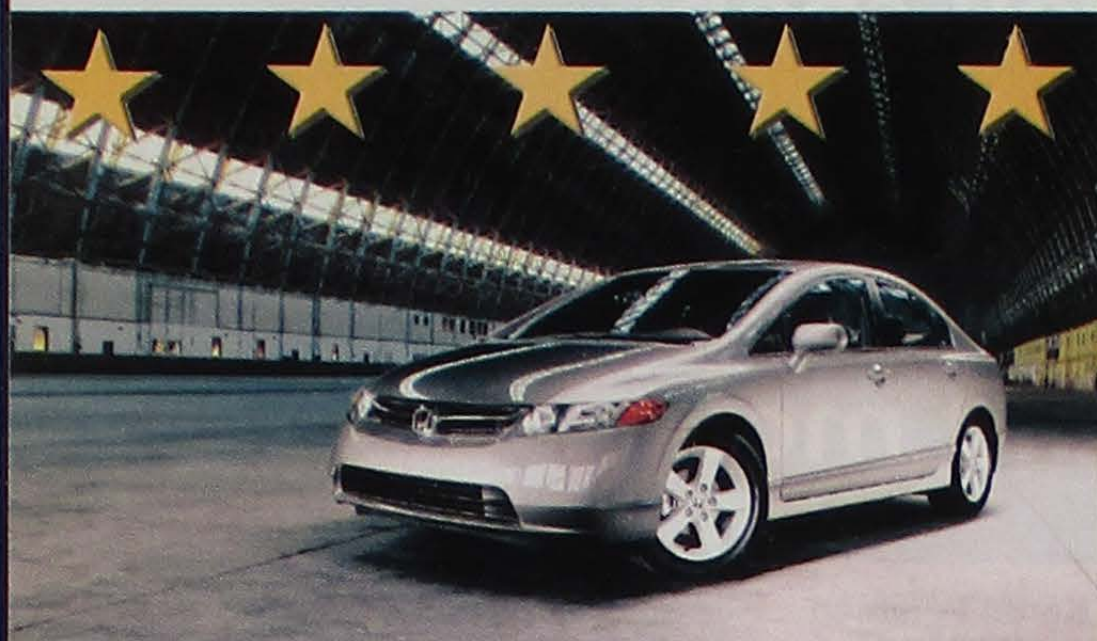
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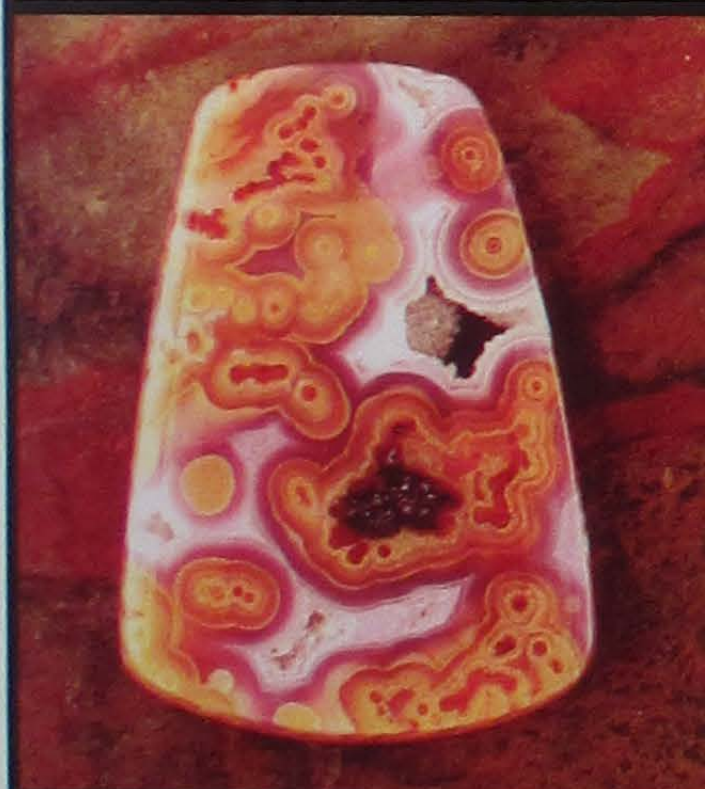
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Where do you spend your holiday time, energy and money?

By Karen Petersen

How do you spend money for the holidays? Some people plan all year and adjust their expenses to accommodate the nearly inevitable holiday costs. I call this method "holiday choices."

Others buy now and deal with the expenses later. This is often accomplished with the use of credit cards. When the bills arrive, they decide to have a budget next year for holiday expenses. I call this the "I will do better next year" method.

What kind of a holiday shopper are you — a holiday choices or budget next year type?

My guess is that most of us would like to make purposeful decisions. When we are in the decision-making role, we know that we can choose how we allocate our time, energy and money. And the opportunity to make choices is at the top of the list of what makes people happy.

It is not too late to decide to make different choices. I know you can come up with more satisfying ways to spend your time, energy and money and create new holiday traditions. Here are choices I have been working on. I hope they help you think of choices that fit your life.

- Give the gift of time to children — time in the park, reading a book, time to just be with and listen to that special niece, nephew, grandchild or any other child you care about. One-on-one time with a child is unusual and often quite enjoyable; my grandchildren never fail to surprise and entertain. And as a bonus, the child's parents may think the gift is for them.
- You might talk with your children about what they received for Christmas last year. If they are in third grade or younger, it is likely that they do not remember. If they do remember, last year's gift may be broken, forgotten, lost or need an upgrade to a new improved model.



- This is a good time to ask your child of any age what they really would like this year. You can help them consider how long they will value and really use the gift. This could be the first step to understanding that setting priorities and making choices are a part of life.
- I know we want to give our children everything they want. Some of us even get reminded of all the "stuff" their friends have. For what it is worth, I have been told by good authority that children are not permanently marred if they do not have everything they think they want or need. The authority was my mother 50 years ago, and mom always knows best.
- Adult gifts used to be hard for me until I quit spending my time shopping and started spending time in the kitchen. I make oatmeal bread and caramel corn. My family and friends look forward to the treat, and I love to

give an appreciated gift. This is also a definite gift to myself. I listen to Christmas music and enjoy the lights on my tree, and the wonderful aroma of baking fills my home. The kitchen is a good place for me to make gifts; your gift workshop could be behind the camera, before an easel, at the sewing machine or in the potting shed.

If you are the "lets budget next year" kind of gal, you probably will not become the "holiday choices" poster child this year. Change takes time, and small steps are how we make those changes.

This holiday season, make purposeful decisions as you spend your time, energy and money because life is more than money. ♦

Karen L. Petersen is a certified financial planner and practitioner in Ames. She occasionally teaches financial planning courses at Iowa State University. She can be reached at 232-2785 or Karen@MyMoreThanMoney.net.

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TIME *to* pass on the Apron

By Nancy Lewis

My husband and I came to live in Ames in September of 1957. From then until last year, we always celebrated Christmas at our house. It was a lot of fun, but it was also a lot of work.

For years, we cut our own Christmas tree. One year we couldn't get to the tree farm because of ice on the roads, so our older son and a neighbor boy cut the top out of an evergreen tree that grew in our back yard. Once the tree we bought was so tall and heavy that we had to set it up in a corner and run guy wires to the nearby woodwork in order to keep it upright. Decorating the tree took most of one day. For a long time I insisted that we top the tree with the cardboard star that we had bought for our very first Christmas as a married couple. (We still have the star, in its original box. The box has the price on it — 29 cents.) Finally our children persuaded us to get a larger and fancier star.

I always used the prettiest of the previously received Christmas cards as decorations in the living room and the dining room. Putting them up took another day. I made a lot of treats: fruitcake, fudge, sugared walnuts and pecans, and lots of cookies, including meringue kisses. We had a neighborhood cookie exchange, and our family would make up treat plates to give away.

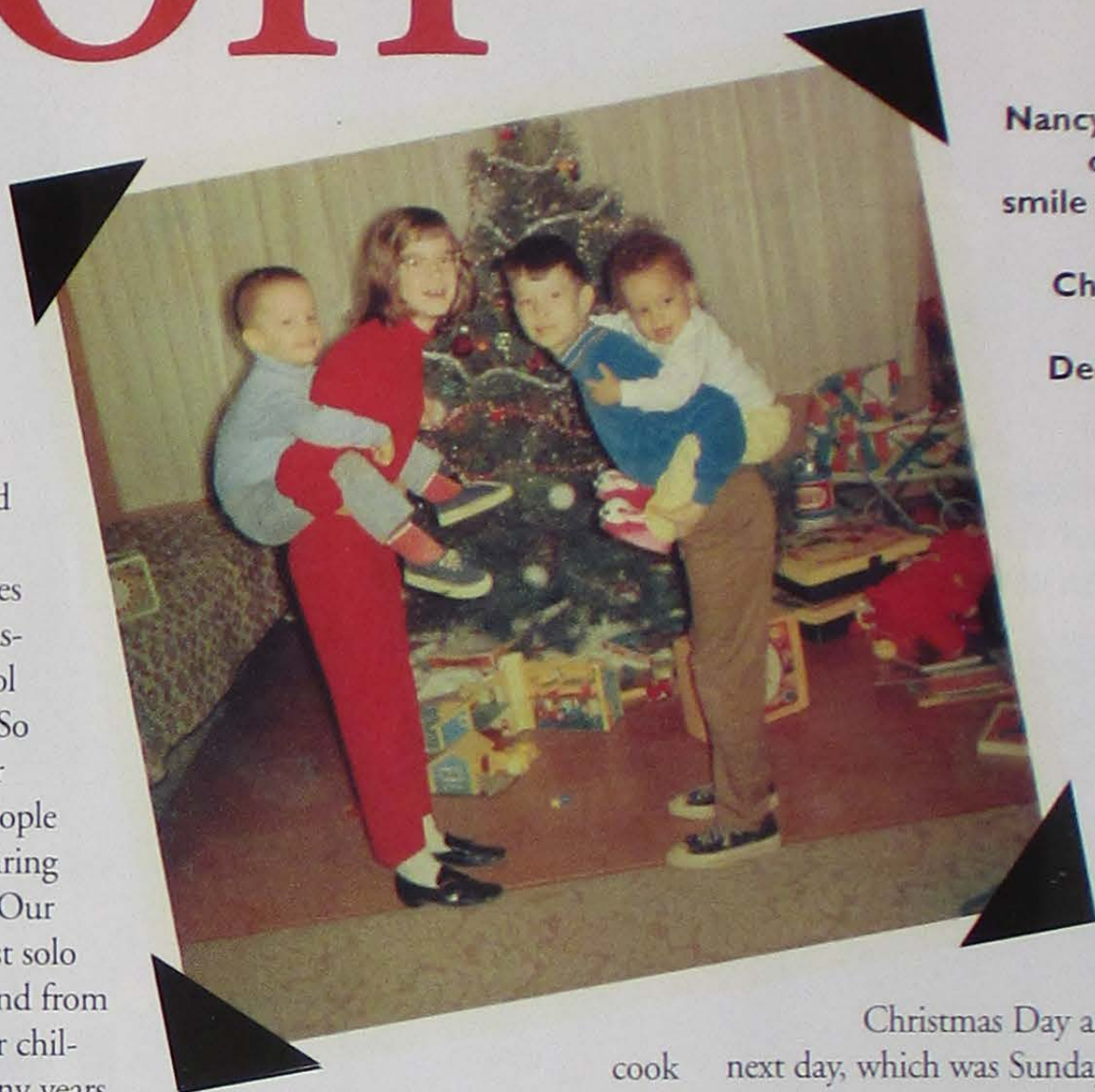
Then there were the Christmas cards to send. One year we received quite a number of cards with pictures of children dressed in their best clothes. We decided to be different. One nice summer day we

encouraged the two older children to smear themselves with soot from our outdoor fireplace and let the baby feed himself chocolate ice cream. Then we took our Christmas card picture.

A lot of people in Ames are gone over the Christmas-New Year break from school and Iowa State University. So there was a real need in our church congregation for people to provide special music during the Christmas Eve service. Our older daughter sang her first solo for that service at age 13, and from then on one or more of our children sang or played for many years. One year they all did a carol together, and all four of their grandparents were there to hear them.

Often we had company in the house over Christmas as well. For many years we had one set of grandparents one year and the other set the next. One year, we had six adults and seven children staying in our house for five days.

We had started a tradition of a Christmas Day picnic in 1962, the year we moved into a bigger house just 10 days before Christmas. There was no way I could have fixed a turkey dinner on Christmas Day that year — I couldn't have found the roaster! So I made some family favorites: potato salad and 24-hour fruit salad, and we had a winter picnic. I liked this way of coping with Christmas dinner so much that I did it for nearly forty years. It meant that I didn't have to



Nancy Lewis' children smile in front of the Christmas tree in December 1970.

cook on Christmas Day. One year I got sick on Christmas morning and the grandmother who was staying with us that year was certainly glad that the dinner was ready!

Last year, everything changed. We went to spend the holidays with our older daughter in California. We didn't put up any decorations in our house because we didn't want to come home in January and have to take them down again. I baked just one batch of muffins. And we actually got our Christmas cards out early!

Southern California last year had the second wettest winter on record. A lot of that rain fell during the holiday season. In spite of this, I had a wonderful time. As far as I am concerned there can never be too many church services. Over the three days — Christmas Eve,

Christmas Day and the next day, which was Sunday — I was able to attend five services. We spent New Year's Day visiting relatives in the area; it was fun to go to other people's houses.

This year we will be celebrating Christmas in Minnesota. The rest of our children live in the Twin Cities area, and our California daughter will fly there to join us. Again we won't put up decorations in our house, though I may do a little more treat preparation. Our children will make the plans and do the work, and we'll enjoy the grandchildren.

I'm finding that I like doing less and not being in charge. Forty-six years is long enough to be decorator, baker, chief cook and hostess. Now I can enjoy the holiday music, worship and family time. I'm expecting a very Merry Christmas!

Nancy Lewis has lived in Ames since 1957. Before retirement, Lewis was a multi-faceted career woman.

Holidays are times spent at gatherings with family and friends. Here at your Ames Hy-Vee Stores we are ready to help you!

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- If you choose to start the evening with one, pair it with appetizers. Your appetizers could be bold, spicy and savory.
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- There are different styles of sparklings. You can choose from a sweet Moscato D' Asti to a crisp and dry brut.
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GET-TOGETHER

WOMEN SHARE ADVICE ON HOLIDAY ORGANIZATION

gurus

By Heidi Marttila-Losure

Some of us might think our Christmas celebrations are a big production, but we probably can't compete with the festivities put on by these local women.

One sets up the kickoff to downtown's shopping season; another manages a church's walk-through journey of biblical times; a third brings the story of "The Nutcracker" to life with local talent each year; and a fourth puts together five holiday events to honor people who work for youth and children.

How do these busy women stay sane and organized during the holiday season? Read on to learn some of their strategies.



Angela Moore

Director of the Main Street Cultural District

WHAT SHE DOES: The woman making sure Mayor Ted Tedesco, Santa Claus, assorted carolers and a group of brass musicians were in the same place last week to kick off the holiday season was Angela Moore, director of the Main Street Cultural District.

Moore and other cultural district members had scheduled a variety of events designed to get the community in a holiday mood to be downtown last week, including a tree-lighting ceremony, an art walk and a festival of trees.

For these events, Moore took care of the big picture, including promoting the events beforehand and inviting businesses to participate, as well as the little details, from getting people onto the fire truck for caroling to getting out the chairs for the brass band.

Coordinating people is a big part of her job.

"I'm a go-between," she said. "I'm the place (where business owners and employees) funnel all their information."

HOW SHE STAYS

ORGANIZED: "Lists are great," Moore said. "And I love e-mail, because we can track what we've sent to whom."

Keeping people updated as the work progresses is important, too.

"We send out a list to our committee of what we've done and what we still have to do," she said.

ADVICE FOR OTHER WOMEN THIS HOLIDAY SEASON:

While women who are planning their own holiday events might not think in terms of committees, Moore said the

basic principle is the same: Delegate.

"For example, if you are having a meal, have someone else bring a cold salad that you won't have time to make," she said. "It's a way to get other people involved and make them feel important even though you are hosting."

Other suggestions from Moore include writing everything down and learning to say no.

"I'm not very good at (saying no)," she said. "(But) sometimes more is not better. For downtown, sometimes having less events is better if we concentrate on them more."

HER FAVORITE ASPECTS OF THE

HOLIDAYS: Moore says that one benefit of working for the shopping district is that most of her seasonal work is done by the first part of December, meaning she has the rest of the month to enjoy the season.

"My favorite thing is spending time with my family," she said. "Our extended family gets together."

Moore and her husband, Mike, recently bought a house and finished unpacking just in time to host a Thanksgiving gathering at their home.

ISU shopping days

Iowa State University students (including College for Seniors students), faculty and staff will receive discounts at downtown businesses Friday, Dec. 2, to Monday, Dec. 5. Free movies will be shown downtown Saturday, Dec. 3.

Holiday shopping hours

Participating downtown businesses will be open from 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. Sundays through Dec. 18, and until 8 p.m. weekdays Dec. 12 to 23. Parking downtown is free every Saturday of the holiday shopping season.

"The Nutcracker"

The Robert Thomas Dancer's 25th anniversary performance of "The Nutcracker" will be performed at 1:30 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 10, and at 1:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 11, at C.Y. Stephens Auditorium at the Iowa State Center. Tickets are \$17.50 or \$15.50; Iowa State University students, people 18 and younger, people 55 and older, and groups of 10 or more receive a \$2 discount. The performances include 257 cast members, most of them from the local area. Professional dancers will be in the roles of the Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier.



Miyoko Kato Thomas

Choreographer for the Robert Thomas Dancer's production of "The Nutcracker"

WHAT SHE DOES: Miyoko Kato Thomas and her husband, Robert, started this production of "The Nutcracker" 25 years ago, a fact that leaves Thomas a little incredulous.

"My gosh, we've been doing this for a quarter of a century," she said.

In the beginning, she and her husband had all the responsibility for the production. They had a system for dividing the work: He worked on the First Act, and she worked on the Second Act.

"Over the years we have learned to accept more of other people being involved," Thomas said, especially when they see someone with talent who can bring something extra to the production.

For example, they were lucky enough to hire a teacher at the Dancer who is considered one of the top Irish dancers in the world. "The Nutcracker" features dances from a number of places – why not add Irish, Thomas said.

"That was very well done," she said.

Little by little, they've added other features to the production since then.

"It became a lot more interesting than traditional 'Nutcrackers,'" she said.

Even with help from many others, the main responsibility of the production remains with her and her husband. If someone can't perform at the last minute, she said, she and Robert are the ones to decide how the show will go on.

"We are always on our toes," she said. "Dealing with live people, things do go wrong. They get sick or injured and can't help it."

HOW SHE STAYS

ORGANIZED: Thomas says they have developed a system over the years that includes, for example, when each of the different groups will rehearse.

"Everything is (planned) using the computer," she said. "I am computer illiterate, actually, but my husband has all the information from past years in the computer."

Even with this system, there are always surprises. Thomas says she sometimes worries, "What if the sky falls?"

"Sometimes it does," she said. "It does happen, but the show goes on."

ADVICE FOR OTHER WOMEN THIS HOLIDAY SEASON:

Thomas said that jogging is one way she deals with her stress. And, as a Catholic, she does rosaries.

"Prayer always helps," she said.

Finally, she said she tries to accept whatever comes.

"If things fall apart, try to fix it as much as you can," she said, "but after that there's not much you can do except accept that things do happen."

HER FAVORITE ASPECTS OF THE HOLIDAYS: Since the "Nutcracker" production

takes so much time, Thomas said she doesn't have a lot of time to prepare for Christmas.

"We bought a Christmas tree with lights already on it," she said. "That's about all I can do."

Instead, she said she and her husband enjoy spending time with relatives they don't get to see that often. Food, beautifully decorated houses and the general mood of Christmas cheer are other highlights for her holidays.

"I think we all have some sort of youth in our hearts (during the holidays)," she said.

"MY GOSH, WE'VE BEEN DOING THIS FOR A QUARTER OF A CENTURY."

continued on page 14

GET-TOGETHER *gurus*

continued from page 13

"Walk through Bethlehem"

A "Walk through Bethlehem" will be at Collegiate Presbyterian Church from 2 to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 3 and 4. The event, which features a one-way journey by many biblical scenes and culminates at the stable with Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus, is free. All ages are invited. Participants can expect to spend an hour to an hour and a half on the tour.



Karen Welk

Coordinator of Collegiate Presbyterian's "Walk through Bethlehem"

"FOR US AS CHRISTIANS, IT'S A GOOD CHANCE TO REALLY FOCUS ON WHAT THE TRUE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS IS."

WHAT SHE DOES: Collegiate Presbyterian Church set an ambitious goal for themselves last year: taking people back in time.

Karen Welk, who is coordinating that journey for its second year, says the "Walk through Bethlehem" event gives people a chance to see the biblical story of Jesus' birth in real life, from Isaiah the prophet proclaiming the coming of the messiah all the way to the stable where Jesus was born.

"For us as Christians, it's a good chance to really focus on what the true meaning of Christmas is," she said. "It's a chance to reflect on that and really experience it."

Her main responsibility is coordinating the people involved in the production. Last year, 75 people were in costume, and Welk said a large number of people are taking part this year also, working on projects like sewing costumes, baking pita bread or making coins that visitors can spend in the biblical marketplace.

"It has brought the whole church together," she said. "Three-year-olds are helping us set up, up to 90-year-olds."

HOW SHE STAYS

ORGANIZED: Welk said she uses many lists to keep herself on task.

She also holds regular meetings to keep participants abreast of the work that still needs to be done, and in general tries to involve as many people as possible in the event.

"Having help keeps everything sane," she said. "And for a church, the more people you get involved, the more fun it is for everybody. It gives them ownership of what (the church) has done."

ADVICE FOR OTHER WOMEN THIS HOLIDAY SEASON:

Welk says she tries to keep a balance in her life by exercising and eating right, though she admits that as the event draws near, it's harder to keep that balance.

She suggests women try to keep in their mind's eye what that balance should be, even if they can't attain it completely.

"Prioritize what's most important," she said. "Then allow yourself to say no to things that aren't a priority."

Clearing the calendar for your family can also help lower stress levels.

"Have time just to be with your family with no agenda, no list of things that need to be done," she said.

HER FAVORITE ASPECT OF THE

HOLIDAYS: She and her family — husband Greg and sons Collin, 8; Evan, 6; and Grant, 4 — have a tradition of cutting their own Christmas tree.

"Most important is ... spending good holiday time with our family," she said.



Marge Becker

Community resources coordinator for Youth and Shelter Services Inc.; coordinator of the organization's five annual holiday luncheons and fundraiser kickoff events

WHAT SHE DOES: People in central Iowa who work for children's causes get a little extra recognition this time of year from Youth and Shelter Services of Ames.

Marge Becker is in charge of coordinating those recognition events, which will take place in five towns in central Iowa over the course of a week.

The biggest celebration, which is on the invitations as the "Friends Holiday Recognition Luncheon and 30th Anniversary Luncheon," is scheduled for Dec. 8 at the Hotel at Gateway Center in Ames. About 250 people are expected to attend.

"It's always a really happy event," Becker said. "Everyone's there because they want to work for causes of youth and children."

Some people will be honored for their philanthropy, and others will be recognized for doing outstanding things to help children.

An award honoring the late Reggie Kelsey will be given also. Kelsey, a young Iowan who aged out of the foster care system at the age of 18, died in 2001. His death raised the issue of the needs of such young adults, who are frequently left with no support system.

The award in Kelsey's name will be given to a young adult who has improved his or her own life in some way — for example, by furthering his or her education, getting a GED or finding safe housing, Becker said.

"When you hear some of the stories, especially from the youth, about obstacles they have overcome, it's just astounding," she said. "They've fought against odds to achieve what the average person takes for granted."

HOW SHE STAYS

ORGANIZED: Becker's work, which she said includes coordinating "all the nitty-gritty details," is planned out on an event form that lists everything that needs to be done and by whom. She also does her best to meet with the 10 or so other people who are working on the event to keep them up to date on the event's progress.

ADVICE FOR OTHER WOMEN THIS HOLIDAY SEASON:

Having some kind of planning tool, like an event form, is

key, she said. And it's important to start planning for holiday events well in advance.

"Failing to plan is planning to fail," Becker quoted. "I really believe that."

But it's also important not to get too wedded to that plan, she said.

"I think you need a balance between planning and flexibility," she said, as it's also important to be able to respond to feedback as you go.

Finally, Becker advised not to forget to treat yourself during the hectic holiday season. For herself, Becker suggested sneaking out YSS' back door

and darting over to Café Diem for a scone.

HER FAVORITE ASPECT OF THE HOLIDAYS:

Becker's family has grown dramatically in just a few years with the adoption of four children: Tyler, 9; Justin, 13; Cassandra, 17; and Jeff, 19.

This is the fifth holiday season she and her husband, Dave, have had with children.

"It's changed my life so much for the better," she said. "It's them that make my holidays especially joyous." ♦

"FAILING TO PLAN IS PLANNING TO FAIL, I REALLY BELIEVE THAT."

Holiday luncheon

Youth and Shelter Services' Friends Holiday Recognition Luncheon and 30th Anniversary Kickoff will be from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 8, at the Hotel at Gateway Center in Ames. Invitations have been sent for the event; if you have not received an invitation but would like to attend, contact Marge Becker at 233-3141 or mbecker@yss.ames.ia.us.



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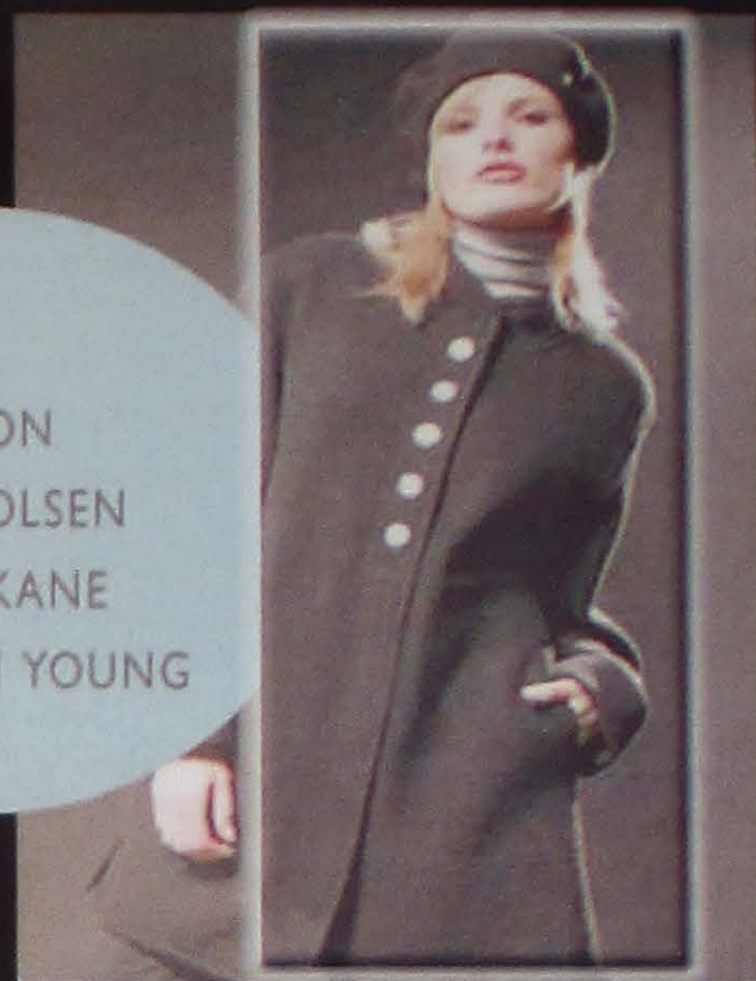
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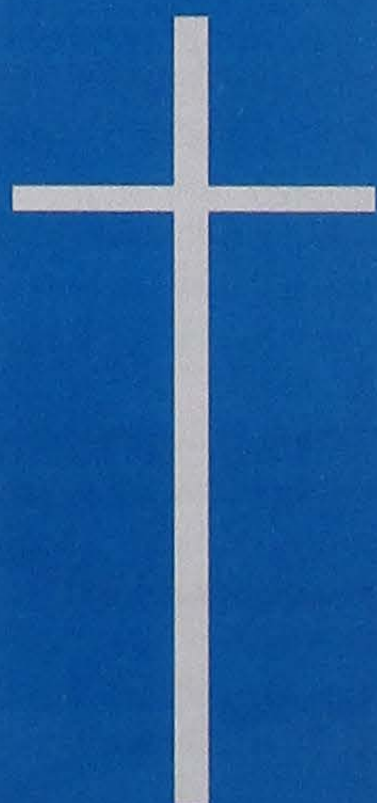
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Art WATCH

Ames musicians put together Christmas CD

By Heidi Marttila-Losure

MUSICIANS

In addition to the group of musicians that performed together at Christmas Eve services, Sarah Beisser said, the group on the CD includes a friend from high school as well as a drummer who joined the group at the first practice session. "The project brought us all together really quickly, and music is just a great language to have in common to get to know people better," she said.

Vocals and violin: Sarah Beisser
Piano: Wendie Cooper
Guitar: Ryan Sheeler
Drums: Mike Keil
Bass: Ben Erbes

WHERE TO BUY "LOVE IS WAITING":

Border's bookstore; Everts Flowers, Home and Gifts; Mary Kay's Flowers and Gifts; Hastings bookstore; and Lemstone Books. In addition to these Ames locations, it's also available at Wellspring in West Des Moines. KASI is also giving away 10 of the CDs.

Sarah Beisser was bouncing along a dirt road in India several weeks ago, one of 14 study abroad students crammed into a seven-passenger jeep, when one of the students started singing "O Come, All Ye Faithful." Soon the rest of the students joined in. It was a bit early for carols, but that didn't stem the yuletide cheer.

"My heart warmed as I pictured everyone in the United States, and in my hometown in Iowa, preparing for this wonderful celebration," Beisser wrote in a recent e-mail interview from India, where she's been studying this fall.

For Beisser, an Ames High School graduate attending St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minn., music plays an important role in her celebration of Christmas. With a group of musical friends, Beisser has often provided music for worship services at her home church, First Evangelical Free Church in Ames. They've performed for about five years on Christmas Eve, when she said she loves to lead the con-

gregation as they sing hymns in the light of glowing candles.

From this experience, Beisser, a singer and violinist, and that group of friends were inspired to put together a CD of Christmas music titled "Love is Waiting." The CD features 14 tracks, ranging from a traditional "The First Noel" to a spirited "Santa Baby" to a contemplative "Mary Did You Know." The artists also included one original track, for which the CD is named.

The group surveyed their friends and family about their favorite Christmas songs when deciding which ones to put on the CD. They also included several songs from their Christmas Eve performance repertoire. After three months of rehearsing, recording, editing and mass-producing, they finally released the CD in mid-December last year — a little late for Christmas shoppers. They are hoping to have better sales this year.

"As of now, my hope is to break even with CD sales," Beisser said. "I'm praying, though, about what to do with a

profit, should we make one. I had thought about giving it to a nonprofit organization in the United States, but my experience in India has revealed an extreme level of poverty that I would like to do something about."

Beisser does not plan a career in music. Her major is in biology. But she takes part in a contemporary praise music group at St. Olaf, in addition to singing in the Cantorei Choir. And music is more than just a way of expressing her creative side.

"As I got older, I learned that enjoying music as well as playing music was also a gift from God and a form of worship," she said. "When I'm listening to Christmas music, or even singing with a congregation, I get this excited, joyous feeling from deep within my heart. Many times the words are what move me, and the meaning behind them, but when those are tied with a building musical intensity or even a reflective, quiet melody line, I sometimes can only close my eyes and listen to people praising the Lord." ♦



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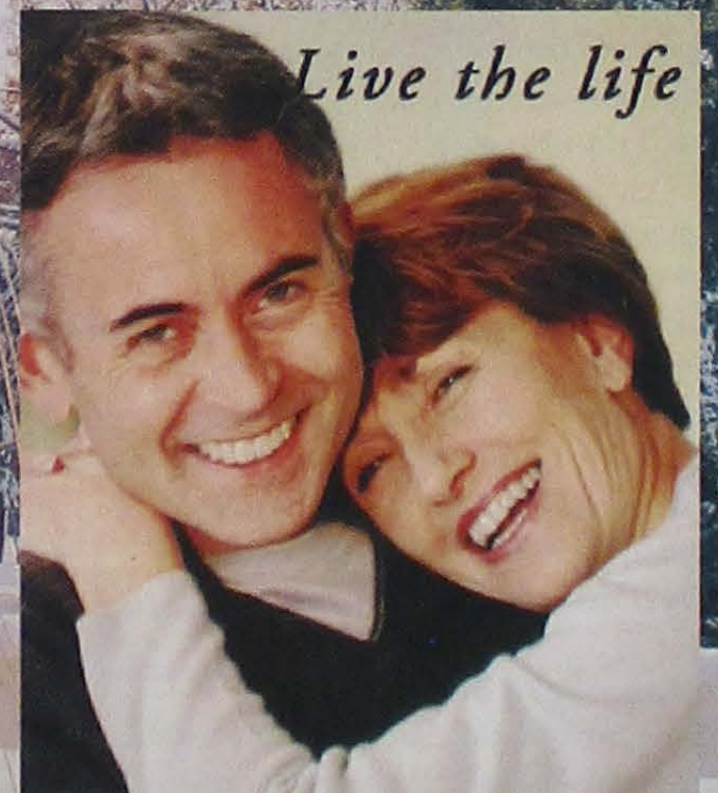
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By Heidi Marttila-Losure

For adding a splash of color to holiday meals, there's nothing like the cranberry.

The cooked, sugar-sweetened sauce is the most common way I've seen it served, but I've met a surprising number of people who prefer the jellied, straight-from-the-can variety (which has the added fun of making a satisfying suction sound as it's thumped onto the serving dish).

But the humble cranberry can venture beyond a mere pretty condiment. Here are some delicious alternatives for this tart fruit, starting with the recipe that has become a Losure family tradition: Cranberry Eggnog Salad.

CRAVING CRANBERRIES

CRANBERRY EGGNOG SALAD

Eggnog layer:

2 envelopes Knox gelatin
1 quart eggnog

Reserve 1/2 cup eggnog in which to soften the gelatin while heating the remaining eggnog. When the eggnog is almost boiling, stir in the softened gelatin and continue heating on low until eggnog gelatin is completely dissolved, stirring constantly.

Cranberry layer:

1 6-ounce package raspberry Jell-O
2 cups boiling water
2 10-ounce containers of Indian Trails frozen Cranberry-Orange Relish

Dissolve the Jell-O in the hot water and add the frozen relish. Stir until relish is thawed.

If using a bundt pan: Prepare the eggnog mixture first and place in pan. Refrigerate until set. Prepare the cranberry layer and allow it to thicken slightly before adding it to the eggnog layer. Refrigerate until ready to serve; it can be made the day before. Turn out carefully onto serving plate.

If using a 9-inch by 13-inch pan: Prepare the cranberry layer first. Add the eggnog mixture when the cranberry layer is set.

MOTHER STAMBERG'S CRANBERRY RELISH

This recipe is a family favorite from National Public Radio's Susan Stamberg, according to "WMT OpenLine AM 600 Silver Anniversary Cookbook: 1963-1988." My aunt-in-law Mary Schaeffer-Losure, who's tried the dish, describes it as odd but good.

2 cups cranberries
1 onion (1 1/2 inch across)

Grind the cranberries with the onion. Add 1/2 cup sugar, 3/4 cup sour cream and 2 tablespoons prepared horseradish. Mix well. Store in refrigerator. (Note: It can be frozen.)

CRANBERRY RUM SAUCE (from "The Raincoast Kitchen" cookbook)

2 cups fresh cranberries
1/2 cup pineapple juice
3/4 cup sugar
1 teaspoon shredded orange peel
1/4 teaspoon shredded lemon peel

Combine the first five ingredients and bring to a boil; simmer 10 minutes or until cranberries are tender.

1/4 cup rum
2 tablespoons butter
dash of salt

Add remaining ingredients and stir well. Serve over puddings, cakes or ice cream.

SAUSAGE, APPLE AND CRANBERRY STUFFING

5 1/2 cups cubed white and/or whole wheat bread
1 pound ground sausage
1 cup chopped onion
2 1/2 teaspoons dried sage
1 1/2 teaspoons dried rosemary
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
1 apple, cored and chopped
3/4 cup chopped cranberries
1/3 cup minced fresh parsley
1 cooked turkey liver, finely chopped
3/4 cup turkey stock
4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spread the bread cubes in a single layer on a large baking sheet. Bake for five to seven minutes, or until evenly toasted. Put the bread crumbs in a large bowl.

In a large skillet, cook the sausage and onions over medium heat until evenly browned. Add the celery, sage, rosemary and thyme and cook for a few minutes more.

Pour sausage mixture over bread in bowl. Mix in apple, cranberries, parsley and liver. Drizzle with turkey stock and melted butter and mix lightly. Spoon into turkey. ♦

DID YOU KNOW?

- Most of the world's cranberries are grown in five U.S. states and in two Canadian provinces. Wisconsin produces the most, based on volume — 36 percent. The other states and provinces are Massachusetts, 28 percent; New Jersey, 12 percent; Oregon, 7 percent; Washington, 4 percent; and British Columbia and Quebec, 13 percent.
- Cranberries have air in them, which allows them to float. Growers take advantage of this and often flood their cranberry bogs to harvest the fruit.

— from www.cranberries.org

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Stress RELIEF

By Diana Risse

over the Holidays

As the holidays approach, we will begin to feel the tension and stress that they tend to bring with them. Before you get caught up in the melee, read up on these stress-busting techniques. Try them yourself to see if they help this year:

Aromatherapy: This technique has been around for thousands of years. Scent can be very soothing to the body, mind and spirit

during times of stress and tension. It can be diffused into the air in several ways — for example, by having a seasonal change in potpourri that is left in small bowls throughout the house or apartment, or by adding a few drops of scented oils to a bowl of water heated over an electric warmer or a tea light candle diffuser. (Caution: If a candle is used, do not leave the room unsupervised due to the fire hazard.)

When traveling over the holidays any long distance, try placing a few drops of peppermint or

orange essential oil on a tissue or cotton ball and putting it on the dash or rear window area of the vehicle. This will help keep you awake during the drive. Remember to refresh the tissue or cotton ball every week to help keep the stress level down as the month progresses.

Shopping strategies: Plan your budget and strategy before you get out there to shop for gifts. Write down everyone you plan to buy for and set a “ceiling limit” on each person, so even if you get several small gifts it tallies up to NO MORE than your ceiling limit. If you can set yourself up to get the “budgetary lists” written up before Thanksgiving family gatherings, then you just need to assign the “ideas” part and you’re ready to go! Just remember to write down a few ideas for each person before you head out the door. That can help keep you more focused on your task at hand.

Try to get to the stores during the week and not limit shopping to weekends only, when the crowds of people are at their peak, as this in itself can add to anxiety!

Remember to focus on your family and friends list when you’re out there and not get sidetracked on yourself. You can write down the tempting products, where you found them and their price and ship that information on to your family or friends via e-mail so they can have some-

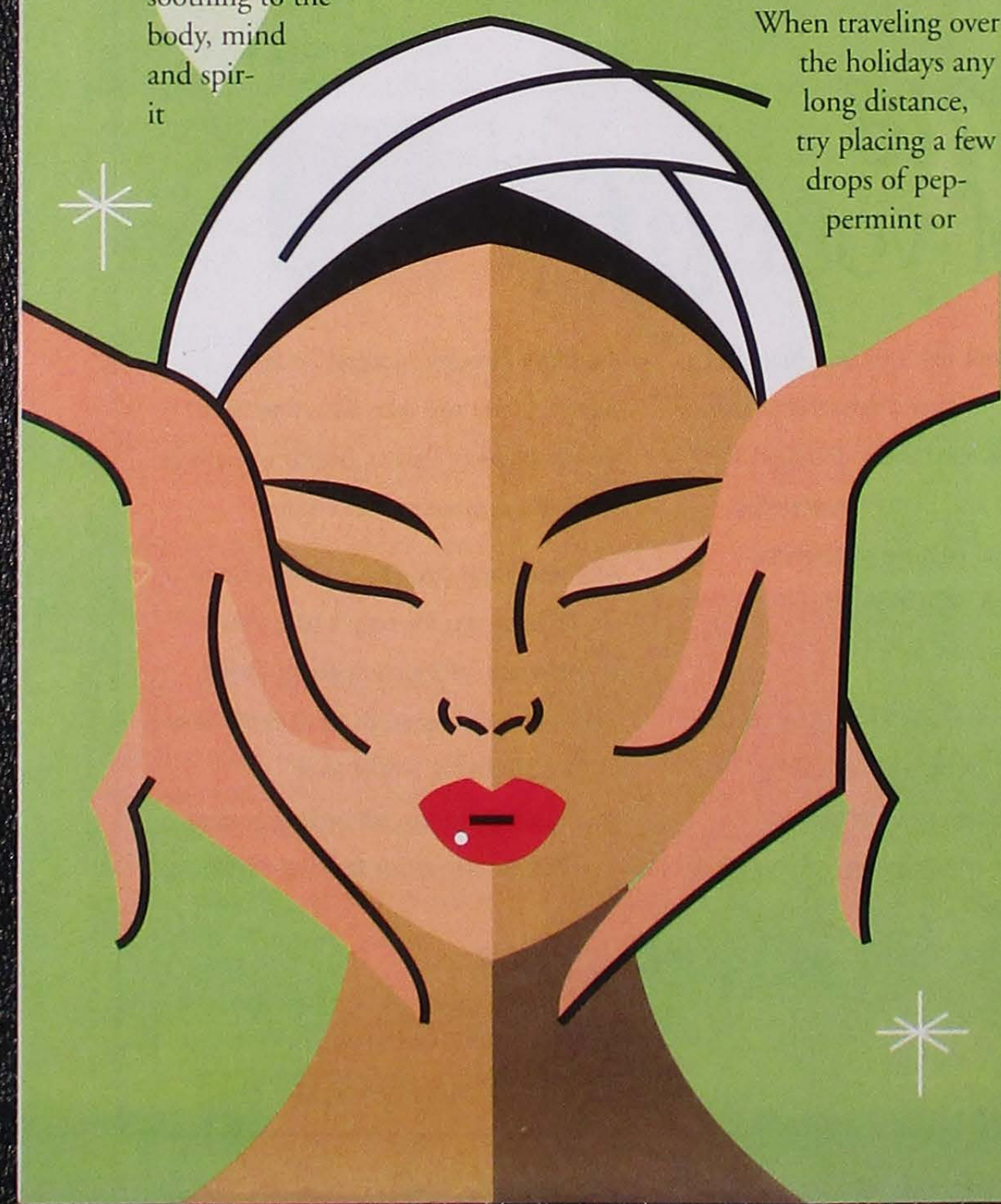
thing they can get you!

After a few purchases, stop and recheck your list. Write down what you bought and place it by the person’s name and list the price you paid for it to make sure you are staying within your budget. Then STOP shopping for that person and go on to the others on your list!

After-shopping relaxation: Remember, too, to take some time out for yourself to settle down after a day of shopping to re-group and re-focus if necessary. This may be a good time to sign up for a massage for yourself, take a long hot bath in your favorite bath salts or wrap those gifts. Maybe even make yourself a large cup of hot cocoa or tea and settle down to write your holiday letter or holiday cards so you get those mailed off before the “mailing rush” begins! If you do have to mail presents, remember to get these FIRST and get them on their way while you finish the rest of your list.

Good Luck and Happy Holidays! ♦

Diana Risse is the owner and operator of Aromassage, found within HealthWise Resources at 327 Sixth St. in Ames.



hue & cry

Definition: Any loud clamor or protest intended to incite others to action.

Rethinking the gift list

By Heidi Marttila-Losure

The great ad-fat newspaper of the year landed on America's doorsteps on Thanksgiving morning, ready for perusing while we fought off the post-turkey nap.

The annual "call to the mall" had arrived.

Now, I'm not opposed to a foray or two into the holiday retail world. For a while, it takes on the feel of an adventure — darting and dodging through the aisles, seeing if the "perfect" gift is on sale somewhere, enjoying the festive decorations.

But adventure tends to descend into drudgery. The piped-in music starts to grate on my nerves. The great deal that lured me into the store is often already sold out. And at some point, I inevitably find myself standing in a long checkout line with my winter coat on, sweltering amid a crowd of people, with just enough items in my arms to make wriggling out of my coat impossible.

And then, of course, there's the issue of what I end up buying if I'm gift-getting by retail. Somehow, by the end of the season and the end of the list, the "grab it and go" mentality takes hold, and I get something

just for the sake of getting something.

I don't think I'm the only one who's faced this dilemma. While there are probably a great number of people who put all sorts of thought into every gift they give, there must be vast numbers of other people who grab something, anything, to put under the tree.

And what happens to those gifts? Sometimes you grab something that will truly be appreciated; other times, that gift will be stuffed in a closet, relegated to a shelf in the basement, or carted straight to the local thrift store — or worse yet, to the curb with the torn wrapping paper. These are the "it's the thought that counts" gifts, but you might have been better off just giving the thought.

Here are some other ways to think about gift giving that could make your gift exchange more meaningful, and your preparation time less stressful.

REDUCE YOUR LIST. There are a number of variations on this strategy: Drawing names, agreeing to not exchange gifts with some people (like cards only for aunts and uncles), or giving gifts only to the children in the family. This may not work for every situation, but it doesn't hurt to

suggest it. You may find that your recipients would be just as happy spending a little more time with one another instead of shopping for one another.

KNOW YOUR RECIPIENTS. I've started to learn that there is a definite stuff cycle to life. Sometimes we are in a stuff-acquisition phase, like when we head off to college, buy a new house, or have a baby. Then there are stuff-discarding phases, like when we move across the country or buy a smaller house. When making a gift list, think about what phase your recipient is in. Sometimes, a "thing" is most welcome; other times, it's just another "thing" that has to be dealt with. For those in the second category, consider nontangible gifts that might be more appreciated.

GIVE USABLE OR EDIBLE GIFTS. My husband has developed a moderate gardening obsession, which means we are blessed with a great harvest each year. Our home-canned goods — salsa, tomatoes, jelly, beets — and especially his homemade wine have been enthusiastically received as presents. And really, since we want to make this food for ourselves anyway, we're not devoting all that much more time to sharing the garden wealth. We

also buy beef and pork in bulk from local farmers, and we've given some of the frozen meat as gifts.

GIVE THE GIFT OF TIME. One year, not long after my sister and her husband had their first child, we gave them a couple movie tickets and an offer of babysitting. From their reaction, you would have thought it was gold. Gift certificates to a favorite restaurant, or an offer to cook a nice dinner, can also make welcome gifts. This kind of gift is almost certain to provide better memories than another "thing" to put on the shelf.

GIVE TO SOMEONE ELSE IN THEIR NAME. Then there are the people on the list who have everything they want. Many charities have come up with a great solution to this problem: Donate to a cause more needy in your loved one's name. Everybody benefits: you probably get to take a tax deduction, your loved one is remembered, and a worthy cause gets a little help.

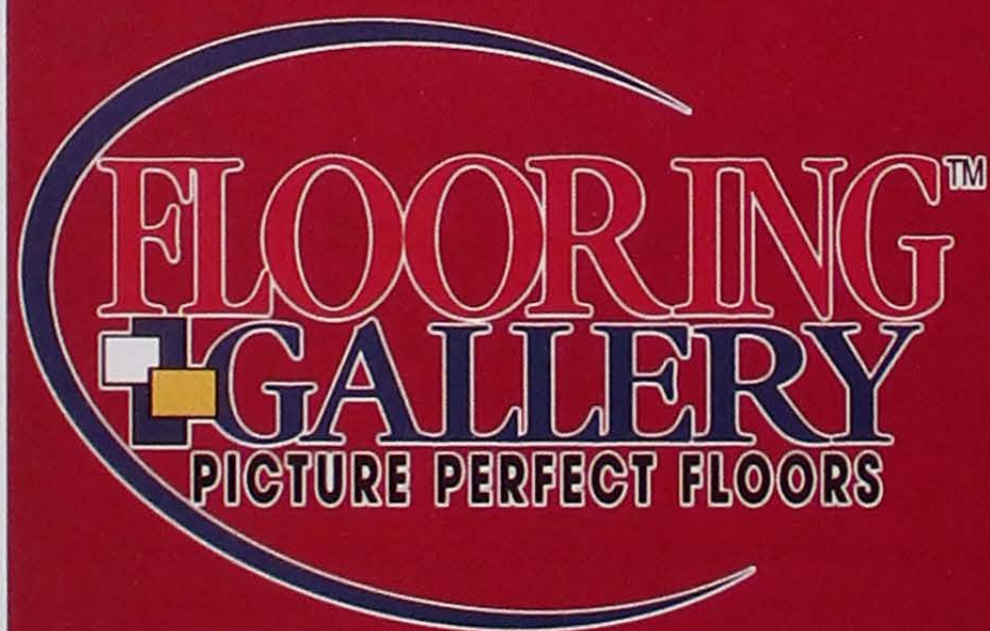
Here's hoping some of these suggestions help you have a less-stressful season and a more-meaningful Christmas! ♦

Heidi Marttila-Losure is editor of Facets and chief copy editor at The Tribune. She can be reached at 232-2161, Ext. 352, or hlosure@amestrib.com.

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